New York Post 31 Jan 62
Approved For Release 2004/05/05 : CIA-RDP64B00346R000400030104-4
Exploration file

Muzzled Senator

DORIS FLEESON

Washington.

In an unusual display of Senatorial discourtesy, Senators have refused the request of Sen. Morse of Oregon for postponement of the vote to confirm John McCone as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

This action is fairly called unusual because of the special circumstances of Morse's situation. He is not away on personal business, a junket or a partisan political errand. He is in Punta del Este, Uruguay, putting his considerable legal acumen and political skills at the service of the faltering U. S. effort to quarantine Cuba as a Communist threat to the American hemisphere.

He is doing this as chairman of the American Republics Affairs subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was reluctant to go to Uruguay, but Secretary of State Rusk persuaded him it was his duty. Morse opposes McCone's confirmation and insisted he must be on hand for the vote. But he was assured by the State Dept. that it would all be over but the celebrating at Punta del Este well before the scheduled McCone vote at 2 p.m. Wednesday.

As the most casual reader of the news knows, the Punta del Este meeting—a conference of the foreign ministers of the 21-nation Organization of American States—actually has been a discouraging, exhausting affair. It has tarnished U. S. prestige and could well threaten the Kennedy grand concept of an Alliance for Progress to develop the hemisphere.

* * *

After some compromise is finally achieved, Sen. Morse will be a key figure in the effort to gain support from a justly irritated Congress for whatever steps the President then decides he should take.

That is another story. Except that it is bound to be difficult, delicate and very probably deeply enmeshed in the sharpening Congressional political struggle, its course today cannot be foreseen.

What can be said with confidence and is well known to the Senate is that U. S. policy and tactics at Punta del Este were no better than the intelligence upon which Secretary Rusk and his aides acted. Similarly, the trained politicians who are Senators perceive that somebody failed to count noses in advance of the crucial decisions that were taken, with their resultant harm to American leadership.

It was surely clear to backers of the proposed new head of Central Intelligence that Morse, already disapproving, would return with an insider's look at the intelligence offered American negotiators and where it went wrong. All Senators have a healthy respect for Morse as a lawyer and observer.

* * *

They chose not to give him a chance to fire his new ammunition, such as it might be. Senators are now on notice that they can be penalized in matters of moment to them personally if they venture upon international duty abroad.

Sens. Dirksen and Saltonstall, Republicans, were the objectors to the unanimous consent sought for postponement of the McCone vote by Democratic Floor Leader Mansfield. It was probably less a personal reaction than a Republican policy decision to help Republican McCone.

Such maneuvers leave a bitter after-taste with untoward results. Many Democrats are for McCone only because the President named him; they question the wisdom of the choice on various grounds. And in the Senate particularly the Spanish proverb that one has no little enemies applies with peculiar force.

Approved For Release 2004/05/05 : CIA-RDP64B00346R000400030104-4